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**State of Wisconsin**  
Department of Health and Family Services

**Out-of-Home Care Committee  
Services to Foster Families Workgroup Minutes  
Child and Family Services Review - Program Enhancement Plan (PEP)  
March 3, 2005**

Agenda:

Items assigned to the Services to Foster Families Workgroup from the PEP

- K.1.a. Hold regional focus groups with foster parents, child placing agencies, contracted service providers and count foster care coordinators to:
  - 1) Identify the service and support needs of foster parents.
- E.2. Explore use of exceptions rate structure to promote sibling group placement.
- E.3. Develop a strategy for recruiting foster families willing to take sibling groups.
  - 1) Propose the elimination of the provision to limit to 6 the number of children in foster homes to accommodate placement of siblings.

Discussion:

- K.1.a. - The group discussed whether the current sources included enough input from foster care agencies or foster parents and decided that the information will be presented to as many additional groups as possible before next meeting by conference call on April 7<sup>th</sup>. It was determined that a statewide survey to foster parents would not be necessary or feasible by the end of Quarter 2 (end of April).

Feedback from the Wisconsin Association of Child Foster Care Coordinators (WACFCC) and other regional foster care coordinators associations included adding the following information: 1) lack of respite services, 2) working through allegations of child maltreatment with foster homes, and 3) foster parents' fear of retaliation from an agency if they bring up issues or challenge the agency. DRAFT was also added to the document since it has not been issued in final form.

- Actions: **Liz** will take the draft to the Northern Regional Foster Care Coordinators meeting.  
**Kate** will take the draft to other foster care coordinators meetings as her schedule permits.  
**Kate and others** in attendance at the WFAPA (Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Family Association) will present to statewide foster parents.

- Nan provided an update about the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. For more information, contact 1-800-947-8074 or [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org)

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- E.2. – The group discussed using the Exceptional Rate to encourage or support the placement of sibling groups in foster homes. Some county staff expressed the desire to maintain county flexibility to utilize exceptional rates, and others stated their concerns about consistency - that flexibility may result in some foster parents receiving reimbursement for the placement of sib groups while other foster homes, in tighter budget times, may not. The group suggested that a section be added to the Exceptional Rate form that specifically addresses keeping siblings together.
  - Questions: Would reimbursement for the placement of siblings be Title IV-E reimbursable? Does it tie directly enough to the child's needs, as is required of reimbursement to foster homes?
  - Actions: **Kate** will look in HFS 44 for a definition of sibling.  
**Todd** will examine HFS 56 for language regarding the placement of siblings and will research how the Special Needs Adoption program defines siblings for the placement of adoption and receipt of adoption subsidy.  
**June** will raise the issue of implementing changes to the exceptional rate to the BPP policy meeting.  
This will be discussed further at the next meeting.
- E.3.1. – The group discussed whether or not members supported changing the limit of 6 foster children in foster homes. It was suggested to still maintain a related requirement in HFS 56.09(2)(i) that limits the number of individuals receiving care in a foster home to a maximum of 8. Members discussed the issue of the number of foster children in a foster home being more of an assessment and placement issue rather than a number issue to assure that a foster home has the capability and supports to care for many children.
  - Actions: **Nan** will examine what other states have as the maximum number of foster children than can be placed in foster homes.

Next committee meeting:

April 28, 2005  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

\* Phone conference – April 7, 2005 from 9:30 – 11:00 am to review final additions to the foster parent support needs document.